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A Family Dairy Finds New Opportunities

New products create market opportunities for a small family-run dairy



Photo: USAID

“It really is worth the trouble to do things well,” says Ulises, who runs the dairy with his sister Martha. “I have a product that I know people want. It’s a product that I am proud to put my name on because the quality of my product will match any competition.”

Ulises Gonzalez is the co-owner and general manager of Lacteos Santa Martha, a family dairy in Jinotega, a town in the mountainous northern region of Nicaragua. Once a small operation, the dairy now produces a wide range of products — white cheese, string cheese, dulce de leche, manchego — thanks to a USAID capacity building program.

USAID provided the dairy with technical expertise to help broaden its market appeal and raise its profile. The company was then able to secure an opportunity to export 4,000 pounds of cheese and other dairy products under the Fioresta label each week to a buyer in the United States. Shortly thereafter, another U.S. buyer agreed to import 20,000 pounds of dry cheese a month from the dairy. The increased demand means not only higher profits for Lacteos Santa Marta and its employees, but also greater income for the dairy farmers that provide milk to the plant.

“With the improvements we made in the quality of our product, we were able to secure a loan to build a new processing plant that has enabled us to increase production and sales,” says Ulises. “It really is worth the trouble to do things well. I have a product that I know people want. It’s a product that I am proud to put my name on because the quality of my product will match any competition.”

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
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